

Guy

GROOVE ME

THE VERY BEST OF GUY



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96k/24-bit Mastered!

- 01** GROOVE ME **02** 'ROUND AND 'ROUND (MERRY GO 'ROUND OF LOVE)
03 TEDDY'S JAM **04** I LIKE **05** SPEND THE NIGHT
06 PIECE OF MY LOVE **07** MY FANTASY - TEDDY RILEY FEATURING GUY
08 WANNA BET WITH U **09** LET'S CHILL **10** DO ME RIGHT **11** D-O-G ME OUT
12 LET'S STAY TOGETHER **13** TEDDY'S JAM 2 **14** TELL ME WHAT YOU LIKE
15 WHY YOU WANNA KEEP ME FROM MY BABY **16** DANCIN' **17** RESCUE ME

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GROOVE ME

THE VERY BEST OF GUY

By 1988, the funky soul phenomenon of New Jack Swing was in full effect. This was the year that Keith Sweat's "I Want Her," Johnny Kemp's "Just Got Paid" and Redhead Kingpin & The F.B.I.'s "Pump It Hottie" all burst onto the charts—all touched by the gifted hand of a young Harlem-bred music hustla named Teddy Riley. Riley, who made his professional debut as a member of the trio Kids At Work, was fast becoming a force to be reckoned with as a writer, producer and keyboardist on early rap hits by Kool Moe Dee and Big Daddy Kane. But it was "Groove Me," the debut single by Teddy's new trio, Guy, that really rang the alarm. One listen to that relentless, shoulder-jacking beat let the world know it was witnessing the Baby Godzilla stomps of a group in possession of all the elements to straight chill at the chart top a while. Guy became the poster boys for New

Jack Swing (so dubbed by writer Barry Michael Cooper), slamming radio and clubs with a relentless throw down of the high-energy hip hop/R&B hybrid.

Signed to rapper-turned entrepreneur Andre Harrell's burgeoning New York-based Uptown Records empire (which included Heavy D & The Boyz, Mary J. Blige, Jodeci and Al B. Sure!), Guy was its first self-contained act. Teddy Riley provided the masterful music that anchored the group. Plus his vocoder-enhanced singing ensured that the innovative vibe of Zapp leader Roger Troutman would be recycled with funk to spare through the nineties and beyond. Manning the front mic was the ferocious, Brooklyn-born pit bull of soul, Aaron Hall, nicknamed "Nasty Man" for racy stage antics with female fans. Aaron brought "the voice," clearly inspired by the GAP Band's Charlie Wilson. Lastly, there was Albert Damion Hall, nicknamed "Crazy Legs" for his slick, acrobatic dance moves that heightened Guy concerts.

Damion was actually a replacement for original member Timmy Gatling, who departed the group for a solo and production career just as the debut album was released in July of '88. In a band bio, Riley explained, "There was a lot of jealousy within the group—we all wanted to be stars." When their original manager, Gene Griffin, tried to replace Aaron, Riley balked and gave him an ultimatum. "If Timmy don't want to be in the group, it don't make a difference. Me and Aaron is really the group!" In the February 2000 issue of *Vibe*, Aaron insisted he was the one who stood by Teddy and gave Gene the ultimatum. Such is the way it has always been with Guy. The end result was that, despite the confusion of Timmy participating on many of the album's songs and having his likeness plain as day on the cover of their eponymous debut, he was unceremoniously replaced by Aaron's little brother, Damion...and away they flew.

Post-"Groove Me," which dominated the R&B chart for 20 weeks peaking at #4, Guy was the name on everybody's lips with a string of hits that sent their self-titled debut album into the stratosphere sales-wise. The follow-up single, "Round And 'Round (Merry Go 'Round Of Love)" was a relative stumble, only reaching #24 with its lumbering tempo and by-the-numbers lyrical hook. But they bounced back strong with a song that was already making mad noise at the club level. "Teddy's Jam" was a slick, swingin', largely instrumental cut that placed the spotlight squarely on Riley, returning Guy to the R&B Top 5. "Teddy's Jam" became a Riley signature, which he'd reprise on each subsequent album.

Interestingly, it wasn't until the album's fourth single, "I Like," that the trio cracked the pop charts (remarkable considering how strong "Groove Me" was). This New Jack Swing sound was so hard and brazenly "Black" that it took a special song to bring the group across pop borderlines. That song was "I Like," which found the fellas coming with sweeter melodies and their first romantic love lyric ("Round And 'Round..." was more on the skins-hittin' tip). With its bubbling percussive track and punchy breaks, "I Like" was the trio's easiest on the ears delight to date, and became their highest charting R&B single from the album, landing at #2, while kissing the pop chart at #70.

The fifth and final single from *Guy* was "Spend The Night," which found them getting back to the big-n-beaty nasty-nasty as Teddy handled the lead vocals with impassioned ad-libs from Aaron. In this era when record companies were able to maximize an album's popularity, *Guy* had been on the streets for over a year and was a double platinum seller. It charted for an amazing 73 weeks, five at #1 R&B. MCA could have released more singles like "You Can Call Me Crazy," "Goodbye Love," even "Don't Clap...Just Dance." Oddly, they relegated to the b-side of "Spend The Night" the album's hottest ballad, "Piece Of My Love," Aaron's no-holds-barred invitation to a down low night of passion with a soulfully mysterious outlaw of love. All applying hotties were advised to tip by Aaron's doorstep with caution.

Though *Guy* didn't get a #1 single on its debut, Teddy did with his Motown-released solo joint "My Fantasy," a highlight of the amazing soundtrack to Spike Lee's critically acclaimed 1989 film, *Do The Right Thing*. It rode the chart for 20 weeks. Of course, Riley was used to affiliated chart-toppers that he'd written and produced, including Bobby Brown's "My Prerogative."

In 1990, *Guy* dropped their eagerly anticipated sophomore album, *The Future*, and continued cranking out hits. The lead-off single, "Wanna Get With U," was meat and potatoes new jack that went to #4 R&B and #50

pop. This time, Uptown/MCA didn't procrastinate getting around to a ballad. The second single was the uncharacteristically tender reconciliation song "Let's Chill," which became the group's highest charting pop single ever at #41 (#3 R&B).

The remaining singles from platinum-plus seller *The Future*, that topped *Billboard's* R&B album chart for three weeks were "Do Me Right," featuring Uptown label mate Heavy D for whom Teddy had produced several hits; the janglin' guitar funk of "D-O-G Me Out" (taking a shameless bite outta Vanity 6's "Nasty Girl" and featuring leads by all three *Guy* members) and "Let's Stay Together." The latter was a mid-tempo, feel-good love song that found Aaron in more of a Billy Eckstine crooner mode (check the intro).

Guy was seemingly on top of the world. They even contributed the theme to the groundbreaking urban film soundtrack, *New Jack City* (1991), its name a clear acknowledgement of Riley's and *Guy's* saturation into the urban pop culture landscape.

Suddenly, it all came to a halt. The "official" reason for *Guy's* disbanding was that it was the only way they could extricate themselves from a contract they had signed with former manager Gene Griffin. Other stories of ego clashes and creative differences—some real, some fabricated—became the understood impetus for *Guy's* undoing on the DL. However, just enough hope was given to fans that, one day, *Guy* would return.

In the interim, Aaron made his solo debut with the sinister funk of "Don't Be Afraid" from the *Juice* soundtrack (1992) to which Teddy had also contributed "Is It Good To You?" on the solo tip. "Don't Be Afraid" stirred up a firestorm of controversy over lines that were perceived to imply a rape fantasy. Shortly after, Aaron's debut solo album, *The Truth* (1993), bowed, featuring his gold-single "I Miss You." Five years later in 1998, Aaron also dropped the *Inside Of You* album. He also made a historic duet with his idol, Charlie Wilson, on "It's Gonna Be Alright," from the multi-platinum *Boomerang* soundtrack. Yet, all the while, Aaron was having very public battles with a girlfriend over the custody of their child, Aaron IV—a subject that would rear its head in a future song.



Baby brother Damion released the solo album, *Straight To The Point* (1994), which featured the single, "Do Me Like You Wanna Be Done," plus duets with Chanté Moore ("Satisfy You") and big brother Aaron (a cover of Leon Russell's "A Song For You"), and several songs produced by a then-budding Brian McKnight. He also dabbled in video choreography and modeling, as well as some acting and playwriting.

Meanwhile, Teddy Riley continued to stake his claim as among the most prolific and diversified production talents in music. He contributed some of his finest work ever to Michael Jackson's 1991 *Dangerous* album (including the smash "Remember The Time") and produced several other talents from Mary J. Blige, Aretha Franklin and SWV to Boy George, Jane Child and the Rolling Stones. Teddy also boldly started a new group—a male vocal quartet this time, called BLACKstreet. They garnered hits such as "Booty Call," "Never Gonna Let You Go" and the luscious "Joy," plus all-star collaborations such as "No Diggity" with Dr. Dre and "Girlfriend/Boyfriend" with Janet Jackson. Yet, with each of the quartet's three albums, lead singers (including the exceptional Dave Hollister) came and went, confirming that all routes on BLACKstreet flowed Teddy's way or no way at all.

Through all this time, rumblings of a Guy reunion constantly circulated, usually followed by a terse "false alarm." One-off soundtrack appearances such as "Tell Me What You Like" from TV's *New York Undercover* (1995) as well as "The Best" from the *Wild Wild West* soundtrack (1999) kept tongues wagging in anticipation. Finally, it became official with the Winter release of the Guy single "Dancin'" and its futuristic video. Seeing AND hearing—in this day and age—was believing. The long-awaited album, *Guy III*, arrived soon after in early 2000.

"Dancin'," which boasts five writers (including "Eddie F." Ferrell), found Guy addressing this new era with a cooler, smoother take on New Jack Swing—the jackhammer beats replaced by a sliding, shuffling groove you could swing to without spilling one drop of Moët. It peaked in the Top 10 of *Urban Network's* "Heavy Hits" chart at the close of '99.

The follow-up single, "Why You Wanna Keep Me From My Baby," was a mid-tempo soul song with a mission—to let women know it's not right for a woman to withhold a man's child as revenge for a broken love affair. Penned by Tony Rich (a fine artist in his own right) with Teddy Riley, the story was primarily torn from the story of Aaron's ongoing struggles. The personal connection is evident in the power of Aaron's performance and his final spoken exclamation. A video for the heart-tugger was even lensed by future filmmaker Tim Story.

Though the trio broke up yet again shortly after *Guy III's* release, the album was not lacking for possible follow-up singles. First and foremost was the powerful ballad "Rescue Me," sung by

Aaron and set to the pizzicato string pulse of James Brown's 1966 classic, "It's A Man's, Man's, Man's World."

Alas, though the unity turned out to be short-lived, Guy's legacy lives on in the amazing collection of music found here. "Yep-Yep!"



A. Scott Galloway
Music Editor,
Urban Network
Los Angeles, CA

01 GROOVE ME

(AARON HALL-GENE GRIFFIN-TEDDY RILEY-TIMOTHY GATLING) R&B #4 PRODUCED BY GENE GRIFFIN & TEDDY RILEY FROM *GUY*

02 'ROUND AND 'ROUND (MERRY GO 'ROUND OF LOVE)

(AARON HALL-GENE GRIFFIN-TEDDY RILEY-TIMOTHY GATLING) R&B #24 PRODUCED BY GENE GRIFFIN & TEDDY RILEY FROM *GUY*

03 TEDDY'S JAM

(AARON HALL-GENE GRIFFIN-TEDDY RILEY-TIMOTHY GATLING) R&B #5 PRODUCED BY GENE GRIFFIN & TEDDY RILEY FROM *GUY*

04 I LIKE

(AARON HALL-GENE GRIFFIN-TEDDY RILEY-TIMOTHY GATLING) R&B #2 / POP #70 PRODUCED BY GENE GRIFFIN & TEDDY RILEY FROM *GUY*

05 SPEND THE NIGHT

(AARON HALL-GENE GRIFFIN-TEDDY RILEY) R&B #15 PRODUCED BY GENE GRIFFIN & TEDDY RILEY FROM *GUY*

06 PIECE OF MY LOVE

(AARON HALL-GENE GRIFFIN-TEDDY RILEY-TIMOTHY GATLING) PRODUCED BY GENE GRIFFIN & TEDDY RILEY FROM *GUY*

07 MY FANTASY - TEDDY RILEY FEATURING GUY

(GENE GRIFFIN-TEDDY RILEY) R&B #1 / POP #62 PRODUCED BY GENE GRIFFIN & TEDDY RILEY FROM *DO THE RIGHT THING*

08 WANNA GET WITH U

(AARON HALL-AGIL DAVIDSON-TEDDY RILEY) R&B #4 / POP #50 PRODUCED BY TEDDY RILEY & GUY FROM *THE FUTURE*

09 LET'S CHILL

(BERNARD BELLE-KEITH SWEAT-TEDDY RILEY) R&B #3 / POP #41 PRODUCED BY TEDDY RILEY CO-PRODUCED BY GUY & BERNARD BELLE FROM *THE FUTURE*

10 DO ME RIGHT

(DAVE WAY-OWIGHT MEYERS-TEDDY RILEY) R&B #2 / POP #73 PRODUCED BY TEDDY RILEY & GUY FROM *THE FUTURE*

11 D-O-G ME OUT

(AARON HALL-DAVE WAY-TEDDY RILEY) R&B #8 PRODUCED BY TEDDY RILEY & GUY FROM *THE FUTURE*

12 LET'S STAY TOGETHER

(AARON HALL-TEDDY RILEY) R&B #16 PRODUCED BY TEDDY RILEY & GUY FROM *THE FUTURE*

13 TEDDY'S JAM 2

(AARON HALL-TEDDY RILEY) PRODUCED BY TEDDY RILEY & GUY FROM *THE FUTURE*

14 TELL ME WHAT YOU LIKE

(AARON HALL-DAMON HALL-SHERRY BLAIR-TEDDY RILEY) R&B #66 PRODUCED BY TEDDY RILEY, AARON HALL, DAMON HALL & GUY FROM *NEW YORK UNDERCOVER*

15 WHY YOU WANNA KEEP ME FROM MY BABY

(AARON HALL III-TEDDY RILEY-TONY RICH-WALTER "MUCHO" SCOTT) R&B #50 PRODUCED BY TEDDY RILEY FROM *GUY III*

16 DANCIN'

(BALEWA MUHAMMAD-DARREN LIGHTY-DELVIS DAMON-EDWARD "EDDIE F" FERRELL-TEDDY RILEY) R&B #4 / POP #19 PRODUCED BY TEDDY RILEY, EDDIE F & DARREN LIGHTY FROM *GUY III*

17 RESCUE ME

(AARON HALL III-BETTY NEWSOME-DARRYL "DEZO" ADAMS-JAMAAL SMITH-JAMES BROWN-TEDDY RILEY-WALTER "MUCHO" SCOTT) CONTAINS AN INTERPOLATION OF "IT'S A MAN'S MAN'S MAN'S WORLD" (JAMES BROWN-BETTY NEWSOME) PRODUCED BY TEDDY RILEY, DARRYL "DEZO" ADAMS AND WALTER "MUCHO" SCOTT FROM *GUY III*



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Editorial Assistance: Barry Korkin
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Art Direction: Vartan
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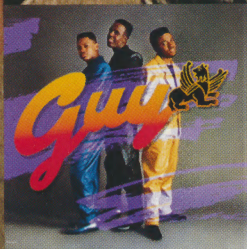


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Guy

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13 TEDDY'S JAM 2
14 TELL ME WHAT YOU LIKE